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Conference Abstract

Can shared governance lead to better service integration?

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Abstract

Local co-ordination of health services through shared governance has consistently been recommended as a way of improving service integration when organisational integration is not possible. Despite this there is very little evidence to support this approach. In this study we explore the role of regional governance in Indigenous health reform in Australia. We look at the effects of governance on relationships between Aboriginal and mainstream services and the impact of these changes on the uptake of health assessments.

The sample includes qualitative and responses from 188 people involved in regional governance in Aboriginal health. The study included data on the uptake of Aboriginal health assessments from July 2008-December 2012. The eligible population was 83190 in 2008/9, 856986 in 2009/10, 88256 in 2010/11 and 90903 2011/12. Logistic regression was used to examine the relationships between organisations within forums and the regional uptake of Aboriginal health assessments.

Increased improvements in the uptake of health assessments were associated with stronger links between Aboriginal organisations working with other Aboriginal organisations and between non-Aboriginal organisations worked with Aboriginal organisations. The findings suggest that governance can contribute to better service integration.